Derrick CASEY

Interview with Derrick Casey conducted by Bruce Guerin on .... 2007 at .... for the Don Dunstan Oral History Project.

INTERVIEW COMMENCES

Can you tell us your name and your current position?

Derrick Casey, General Manager of Regency International Centre, that's part of TAFE[1] SA Adelaide North Institute.

And how's that connected with all the other food training establishments around here?

Well, Regency International Centre is the over-arching centre that looks after all of the cookery, hospitality, food and beverage processing, butchery, bakery and a few other aspects of the tourism industry like sport and recreation, leisure tourism, adventure tourism, eco tourism.

And the hospitality, hotel management, those sorts of things?

All of that. So we've got all of the original basis of what used to be the School of Food and Catering many, many years ago, is now encompassed in the Regency International Centre.

What about *Cordon Bleu*, where does that fit in?

Under Regency International Centre as well, so that comes under my responsibility with *Le Cordon Bleu* and the International College of Hotel Management, which is the affiliation we have with the Swiss Hotel Association.

You've been involved in food-related and hospitality-related training for some time now.

I started back in the Pennington Migrant Hostels on actually 21st January 1974, so yes, it's been a while, Bruce.

And you're the sole survivor of those early days?

Yes, I am, actually. I'm thinking back to Bernie Errington, who ended up as head of cookery, retired about five years ago; Grahame Latham, who was the original head of the

[1] TAFE – Technical and Further Education.

school and actually started Regency as we know it today, retired several years ago. Yes, I am the only survivor.

How did it all start?

Well, it actually started with an approach from the South Australian Guild of Cooks in the mid-'60s to the then Government and that was led by a fellow by the name of Barry King and supported by his brother, Ivan King. Barry was a chef, very keen to develop the hospitality industry in South Australia, and approached the Government to highlight the need for formal vocational training in cookery and hospitality, principally.

And what happened to actually get it going?

That particular discussion went on with various ministers of the Government and eventually with the Premier, Don Dunstan.

It was in the first Dunstan Government time.

Yes, it was and it was indeed the first Dunstan Government that supported the development of the original Regency, which when I started we were actually operating in temporary facilities in the Pennington Migrant Hostels in the Nissan huts. We had cookery and bakery there, so in 1974 we had about six full-time staff, a couple of hundred students and we ran a range of cookery and bakery programs, Butchery was conducted at the Wayville Showgrounds in the Meat Pavilion, so the only time they couldn't run classes, of course, was during the Royal Show. We started the hospitality programs in 1975 and during that period, by the early '70s the actual development of Regency had been approved by the Government, so we were involved in the final design and development of Regency.

Can we just go back to that time when the decision was made within government?

Yes.

What were the precursors to that, how did it get to that stage?

That was really ongoing negotiation with the professional cooks' association, which was the Catering Institute of Australia, a branch here in South Australia, and the Government. They provided quite a bit of evidence in terms of the potential for growth in the hospitality and tourism sector in South Australia. Now, coming from Sydney, which at that stage

was doing reasonably well in tourism, to South Australia, where there was really only one hotel that could be almost classified as being international and probably less than a handful of restaurants that served food that would be regarded as an international standard, it was a brave step by the Government to build a centre which, when it was opened in 1977, Regency was the largest and most modern hospitality and culinary institute in the Southern Hemisphere, if not one of the biggest in the world.

So did the Government in the lead-up to that commitment receive an analysis and a proposal externally?

Yes.

Or was work done internally in the Government?

Internally and externally. The major external push came from the Catering Institute of Australia. Once they made the decision, that's when they cast the net to find a suitable initial head of school, where they found Grahame Latham. Grahame was then a head teacher in East Sydney Technical College; in fact, he was one of *my* teachers, where the association came in me eventually coming to South Australia. They brought Grahame down in 1973 to do the final design for the Regency Centre and he really led the concept and the design, took the concept from the Government and the Catering Institute and developed – he was probably one of the most responsible people for the development of Regency, with the exception of course that the Premier, then Don Dunstan, with his passion for hospitality and food and his obvious vision for the State and moving into arts and hospitality, supported the concept of developing a school that was probably ten times bigger than the South Australian economy realistically needed at the time; but when you look back at what it now is – and it is now recognised as one of the leading institutes of its type in the world – it was a far-reaching vision that proved to be very correct.

So what do you think or what do you know led Dunstan to pick this up and champion it?

I think his natural passion in the area of arts, hospitality, tourism. He had a clear understanding and a clear vision for the State. We spent quite a bit of time talking with Don about his vision for the development of Regency. He could clearly see the need for the upgrading of the industry in South Australia and, if that was going to be done, there

needed to be a very high-quality technical institute to assist in the development of the staff.

How much was this a Don Dunstan vision and initiative, and how much was it a Grahame Latham or Derrick Casey?

Well, the original initiative was obviously Don's because the decision to build Regency and commit the funds that were required to build Regency was done before Grahame and myself arrived. I guess Don gave us the tool and Grahame and our team were able to turn his vision into, I think, and we've turned, as I say, what was a couple of Nissan huts and a temporary meat training centre into an international centre training over eight thousand students a year from seventy-odd different countries around the world.

I think that could be called an understatement that the tool was well-used. So there was this Government commitment to back the proposal.

Yes.

Were there buckets of money?

Look, there was adequate money to undertake the development. There's never buckets of money in government, it doesn't matter which government you're in and how much support you've got. In anybody's view, there is never enough to do everything that you'd want to do. However, in saying that, the structure that was built for the original Regency, which of course we're sitting in the new centre now that was only opened in 2002, it was a world-class centre, so the money was certainly forthcoming to a level that enabled Regency to move forward for the next twenty years. Now, that's quite an extraordinary achievement.

But when you say who really then – I guess Grahame Latham took the baton from Don and made his vision come to life. Grahame was certainly the major visionary and instrument in terms of what he did then with it, because he didn't only develop Regency by employing a range of staff from all over Australia and in fact internationally who were capable and able to develop Regency to its level today, but he worked on State-based projects. For example, he worked with Bruce Farquhar in the development of different styles of fruits and vegetables and nuts, they set up experimental plantings in the Adelaide Gaol and at Cadell, at the Cadell Remand Centre, planting things like fresh pecan nuts, pistachio nuts.

Derrick CASEY

I was a chef originally with Qantas Airways and we were pretty well-serviced in Qantas in terms of the range of product that we could get because in those days you were actually served real food – (laughs) I mean, it cost half an adult wage for an economy class ticket to England when I was working for Qantas, so there was no restriction on the quality of food you could have. Coming to South Australia, the exotic herbs range that I could get in 1974–5 were parsley and chives, and chives weren't always available. (laughter) So part of Grahame's work was working with infrastructure projects and producers and growers in the State, but first working with people like Bruce and experimental plantings in the gaols just to prove, number one, that the simple things like cherry tomatoes – you couldn't buy cherry tomatoes in South Australia; you couldn't even buy a regular size and shape tomato; you'd get a half-a-carton of Grosse Lisse and, beautiful tomatoes, but you'd have to sort a half-a-carton out to get six the same size to use for a buffet presentation or something that chefs would need.

So Grahame really took the vision of Don and worked with, again, people like Bruce; he worked with the South Australian Tourism Commission in undertaking further research on tourism events – he and I were instrumental in some of the very early tourism round tables that were held in the early '70s and we've continued that sort of relationship in helping to develop products and services and supporting the industry in its development in every aspect of hospitality and tourism. So I have to say that Grahame, until his retirement from Regency in 1995, was a huge influence on the developing and shaping of what Regency is today.

Do you recall how Don Dunstan, his Department, the Government, supported or worked with or advanced these initiatives in working with the people in the community?

They were supported in the respect of the Government providing through its various funding arms funding for the sort of work that we talked about in terms of the experimental growing, so Don and the ministers at the time – because, I mean, Don was very influential during this period and this was, I guess, one of his babies where he'd seen Regency grow, by the late '70s we had expanded our core programs into all of the basic facets of the hospitality, tourism and food industries, particularly in meat and baking – and the requests that Grahame made of the Government were usually supported very highly. So we certainly had extremely good support in the developing years of Regency while

Don was the Premier. And that has been continued, with some ups and downs, with progressive governments.

Can you recall who other ministers were that were involved in this?

Mike Rann was certainly involved, he was Education Minister at one time, but that was in the, I think, late '80s. I'd really need to get my notes out to look back as far as that. Des Corcoran was involved at one stage.

But going back when Don was Premier – – –.

I don't recall who the ministers were involved back in the '70s when Don was Premier because Don was the most prominent connection that we had. I guess it was one of the fascinating things about South Australia: again, coming from Sydney and working in a range of systems in Sydney, you didn't have that level of connection to even the ministers, never mind the Premier; but in South Australia, if we had a problem, it wasn't unusual to pick up the phone and talk to the Premier directly, or the Premier's adviser, and have a response in terms of what was required to assist the development.

And the adviser would be one of his ministerial staff or a public servant?

Yes, yes, one of his ministerial staff.

Do you recall who that might have been?

I'm sorry, I don't.

No, that's okay.

It may well be worth having a talk with Grahame, because he was – being the head of school at the time and I was his lieutenant at the time – he did most of the dealings directly with Don and his ministerial staff in the developmental stages of Regency. He was actually chartered with what I was chartered with in this new centre: design, development, negotiating with the Government, negotiating for funds, negotiating with Treasury, doing all of those sorts of things.

Yes.

Grahame was really the man during the '70s in the development of Regency, and I supported him doing it.

Now, going back to Pennington, which is a convenient symbol of the early days, doing cooking classes and so forth down there, what was the reaction of the participants? Were people lining up and very eager to get in, or was it hard to generate interest in cooking courses?

No, no, it was actually very easy to generate interest. Our core students were apprentices. Mind you, in 1975 we started a full-time, professional cookery program, the Commercial Cookery Certificate, which allowed people who weren't able to gain an apprenticeship to come in and do full-time training to gain at least the educational aspects and practical aspects that allowed them to go in and gain a job as a cook in the industry. We were actually the first college in Australia to do that by many, many years; it wasn't until the mid–late '80s that other colleges in Australia actually introduced such a pathway. But we used to run lots of leisure interest courses as well – vegetarian cookery, charcuterie - well, pâtés and terrines was a classic short course: one of my first students in a course that I ran on pâtés and terrines was Maggie and Colin Beer, and it was that class that we actually taught Maggie how to make her famous Pheasant Farm Pâté. So we've had plenty of pretty good examples of supporting people in the State to develop through to what they are today.

And that was through the part-timers' – – –.

That's right. It was a part-time course, one night a week, in pâtés and terrines. It was just after Colin had won the Churchill Scholarship for his pheasant breeding out at the farm and they were trying to find a way to use pheasant livers so I showed them how to make the lovely soft pâté that they make today.

I hope you have continuing contact.

(laughs) We wish. We were never smart enough to take royalties on recipes developed at that time.

I'd be interested to follow up in two directions. One is some of those early full-time students or the professional students, if you like, and what they've gone on to do or the sort of influences they've had on development of food and hospitality here.

Sure.

Then perhaps after that talking about Maggie Beer and other type people who came in – I was going to say 'on the edge', but it's not necessarily the edge.

No. Yes. I mean, again, I have really got to drag my memory back, but if I look at a few of my students who would be recognised in South Australia, Peter Hurley, of course, of the Hurley Hotel Group is President of the South Australian Hoteliers Association now very influential in the State: he was one of my students in a part-time Commercial Cookery Certificate class that I used to run on every Saturday. Andrew Fielke, who of course has spread into the native food, set up the Red Ochre Restaurants, is now a bit of a celeb chef travelling around the world undertaking all sorts of demonstrations, particularly in respect to Australian native foods in modern cuisines. Peter Reschke, who currently runs the restaurant down at d'Arenberg Winery, and his wife Jo; people like Spencer Cole and Bethany Finn – Bethany was the executive chef at the Hilton, and Spencer and Bethany were both students of mine, who now run the Urban Bistro. There's actually lots of our students who –

Mark McNamara?

Yes, Mark was one of my students. In fact, because my background's a chef – but Grahame also started winemaking in 1974 when we were still in the Pennington Migrant Hostels, and he borrowed a manual grape crusher from Roseworthy Ag College and we used to pass the grapes through that into one of our big stainless steel stockpots, and when we caught it out of the grape crusher we caught it onto a bakery wire mesh to shake the grapes through to separate the skins from the stalks, and the first teacher that he brought in, and that was in 1975 – and believe it or not I've still got a couple of bottles of that 1975 wine – was Robin Moody who was one of the head winemakers for Penfold's at the time, so he actually taught us in the first aspects of winemaking. The second lecturer we brought in the following year was Richard Worland who became the head of the Australian Wine Export Council. We had a lot of fun in those days making wine. We now have a substantial winery on-site and we teach small-scale winemaking. Many of the grape growers around the State who've set up their own small wineries have actually come through our small-scale winemaking program because they didn't really want to take on a three- or four-year degree program in oenology.

It's interesting, because in many ways that start sounds more like a backyard in Norwood than a high-class cooking establishment.

That's dead right.

But also some of the interest in produce and gardening were going on in suburban backyards but not commercially at that stage.

Yes. Well, that interest – and of course I was very interested as a chef in winemaking so I actually became very involved in the teaching of the winemaking programs that we had each year and still make wine today in the college with a small group of interested colleagues – but it's that exposure to wine that drove me to set up a course called Food and Wine Philosophy, which I started teaching in the mid-'80s, and Mark McNamara – so this is a really long way around to the question you asked about Mark – was one of my students in the Food and Wine Philosophy which drove his significant interest in food and wine, which is where he's really found his niche in really matching food and wine in the restaurant industry and particularly with his business in the Barossa now. We still have very good contact with Mark; in fact, he's mentoring one of our young students in our young leaders' program that we set up recently.

Well, moving on to the other branch, people who came to the leisure courses or the part-time courses: are there other people who are involved there or other activities that have started from that side?

Yes. I'm sure I could think of more if I dug back with a couple of my colleagues. But one simple example: Grahame sent me off to Byron Bay to do some professional development in a small Mexican restaurant in Byron Bay which was at the time reputed to be one of the best and most authentic Mexican restaurants in Australia. They even made their own corn chips – you know, ground the corn and had all of the basic equipment. The fellow, interestingly, was an English guy but he used to spend six months of the year in Mexico and then come back and run the restaurant in Byron Bay for the other six months: not a bad life. So we set up a part-time Mexican course from that development and Norm Frohnert, who was one of my students in the Mexican program, he'd actually done the Diploma in Hospitality Management, really hadn't found his niche so did the part-time course in Mexican cookery and set up the Mexican restaurant in North Adelaide, Zapata's. Now, from that, Norm then got together with his partner, who set up the Mexican place just down the road here, Mexican Express, who now export quite good-quality Mexican packs, nacho packs, all over the world. So out of that little short course you've got a string of things that happened through there. Again, there are a lot of examples where

people have come through short courses of that nature and gone on into the development of product.

We also, Grahame was very keen in working with the industry, not just through our graduating students. Regency never had the philosophy of just being here to provide education and training for people who were going into the industry. He worked very actively with the industry and we've done consistently a large amount of research and development, practical development, for the food industry. So things like Aldinga Turkeys, when they were only selling turkeys twice a year, Easter and Christmas, and they were looking for the development of value-added product, our smallgoods makers and butchers worked with them and helped them develop the turkey pastrami, the turkey cuts, all of the other turkey products that you now see, and I mean people buy turkey commonly for any time of the year because you can buy turkey steaks and have them like a pork steak. We did similar work with the fledgling kangaroo industry when they first started in Jesser. Meats up here off Grand Junction Road in helping them to develop and promote products. Same with the South Australian Venison Association in developing products for them. We work now with thirty or forty different companies constantly in helping them to develop new products. There wouldn't be that many products in South Australia that people eat that haven't had some influence from Regency in terms of assistance in the development of those products.

In the beginning, as you've been saying, there were these blow-ins from Sydney that were attracted to start things up. As time went on, you had a fairly open recruiting approach to the next stage of development and people coming in from chef-ing or whatever and teaching for a time or doing both?

Absolutely. In the early stages, again, Grahame was mainly responsible for the recruitment in the early stages, and I have to say in the first ten years the majority of staff that were brought in were from interstate and overseas because the specialists that he wanted to drive the programs – people like Ingo Schwarze who we brought in from Sydney, he was the pâtissier for Qantas Airways at the time, Ingo was a colleague of mine when I used to work for Qantas as a chef, he was one of the best pâtissiers in the world, not just in Australia. He came from three generations of pâtissiers in Germany, and in international competition, which he's been in for many years – for example, at the 1984 Culinary Olympics in Frankfurt, he won five perfect golds. First time it's ever been

achieved. Now, Ingo set up the Pâtisserie program that we still run today and is a leading pâtisserie program in the world; it even exceeds the outcomes that are delivered in some of the famous pâtisserie programs in Switzerland and France.

When you say exceeding outcomes, by what sort of indicators?

In terms of the quality of product, the quality of staff, the range of skills those staff have, and we can see this from the international interest from industry for our graduates. We've run pâtisserie programs – again, the first in Australia – every year for over twenty years now and the product is just extraordinary. But the proof in the pudding is the young graduates – and these graduates are people who are already qualified cooks or pastry cooks, so they've already done their apprenticeship, they've worked in industry and they want to specialise in pâtisserie – they all gain jobs. I mean, people like Graham Forestal, who was a young cook, did the Pâtisserie course and set up his business in Hahndorf in the specialist chocolates and candies. Most of the small, specialist chocolate shops in Adelaide are graduates of Ingo's course, because there was nothing available anywhere to enable them to develop those sorts of skills. So yes, a lot of people were brought in from interstate and overseas in the first ten years; however, there were a number of local South Australian chefs and food service people employed, people like Michael Strautmanis who was the owner of La Provençale, the famous little jazz niche in North Adelaide. Michael was larger than life in more ways than one and was a fantastic lecturer and manager in the hospitality area. People like Peter Castell, who was the executive chef of the Tranmere Village Restaurant, which, interestingly, was one of the most highly-regarded restaurants at that time. Bill van den Brock, who was at the – what was it called? – the Coal and something Restaurant in Adelaide.

Coalyard?

Coalyard, yes, I think it was the Coalyard Restaurant in Adelaide.

In Hindmarsh Square.

Yes, that's right, yes. He was the executive chef there. So as we progressed into the late '70s, early '80s we appointed quite a lot of local, South Australian chefs, but they were the top people around the place, they were the people who were really leading the way. I mean, Cheong Liew we employed after he got out of Neddy's, he was a lecturer here for

seven years – in fact, I lent Cheong to the Hilton for a year to help the Hilton develop the concept of their restaurant so I let him go on a year's leave without pay, and George never sent him back. (laughter) But Grahame and I certainly continued on that tradition, always looked for the best in the business wherever they had come from. We hired other pâtissiers and smallgoods makers from overseas. Horst Ockinger the first smallgoods maker we brought in was a German smallgoods maker with a very, very high reputation, at the time running a factory in Fiji, but Grahame found him through word of mouth, researching. So he would never just take second-best, he always wanted the best possible people to develop and then drive the programs forward, and that's why by the late '80s Regency was without question the most highly-regarded and award-winning institute of its type anywhere in Australia and is still regarded as the leader in Australia. But it was because we went out and brought in the best people we could get to develop the best range of programs and Grahame was never afraid of starting up another new program, and people would often ask him, 'Well, why? There's no industry demand in that.' And he said, 'It doesn't matter; we'll create it.' And he did. And that, again, has been very much the philosophy of lead by example. While you have to support industry you don't necessarily sit and wait until something happens to actually put it on the table and present it.

So this is development, if you like, in the industry; was there an equivalent development in general community attitude, public attitudes, or was that lagging behind?

At first it was lagging behind. The real development in terms of cuisine in particular in South Australia I believe came about from the beginning of the '90s. Up until then there was still a very traditional and Anglo-Saxon approach to food and food requirements. It really was the '90s was the beginning of a bit of a cultural revolution in food when we started to see the emergence of obviously foods like Thai food, different provinces of Chinese food so it wasn't just the stir-fried Sichuan, stir-fried typical sort of chow mein; you started to get some specialities like the Sichuan province or some of the –

Beijing.

– yes, Beijing, Mongolian. Some of it was great, some of it was bloody awful, but of course as South Australians started to travel and learn what the real food tasted like in those countries they came back and very quickly let the restaurants know who were

presenting an unauthentic representation of that food that that wasn't what they wanted. By the mid-'90s we were truly one of the leading States in Australia in terms of our quality of food and wine, and that grew at a similar pace.

It's interesting looking back because coming, I guess, very much from an English background as the South Australian State tended to do with little – you know, we had the Germanic influence in parts, we had quite a strong Italian and Greek community influence, we grew the Asian influence during the late '80s and '90s, but the things – if you look at the food product range, our food available in the restaurants was pretty basic right up through the '80s, or a few standouts but not many. Bread was terrible, awful quality bread, and that's only just now starting to turn the corner. Smallgoods, if you found the right smallgoods maker you could get some fantastic smallgoods but there were very few of them. Most of them were the plain – you had sausages full of meat and fat and filler that cost you two dollars a kilo but tasted like they cost you fifty cents a kilo. Cheeses, we had nothing. I remember when the first Camembert style was introduced – that was actually made in Tasmania from a company called Unicorn, I think it was the late '80s or early '90s, and you actually had to buy this Camembert and let it ripen because if you cut it straight away it'd have that big, chalky white piece in the middle with a bit of the lovely soft Camembert on the outside. People didn't understand how to do that and they'd often take it back to the shop and say, 'This is awful, it's got this white solid piece in the middle, I don't want it.' And you look now at where we are: if you walk down the corridor right now, Bruce, you'll see Neil Willman, who was the head cheesemaker and teacher in Gilbert Chandler in Victoria, has now set up our cheese centre here and there's a group of students right there now making a range of Cheddars, Camemberts, Bries, goat's cheeses, blue cheese. They'll be there for two weeks full-time, and they produce a fantastic range of cheese. We're working with all of the small cheesemakers in South Australia helping to develop their staff, again by bringing people like Neil Willman in because he's one of the key specialists and we're developing our own staff in that area.

So you see in the last ten years we've started to develop some good bread. We sent one of our bakers over to San Francisco for three weeks to learn the art of artisan baking. He brought back with him some of the original and certified – and we've had it certified by Adelaide University students in the science area because they DNA-mapped it – certified San Francisco sourdough, and he's still got the starter now. He runs artisan bread

programs for an increasing number of bakeries across South Australia, so you're actually starting to see now a wider group of bakers producing good-quality breads that people actually taste and say, 'Is this bread? It's not what I've been used to, but boy, it's good.' So we're nowhere near Europe, but we're actually starting to take some steps.

The cheeses, we're getting some fantastic cheese in there. Smallgoods have really taken a dip with unfortunately some of the incidents that we've had in South Australia and it's hard to find good raw smallgoods that are matured and fermented and not cooked so it kills the bloody things.

Is that the industry's caution, or is it regulatory requirements?

It's both. Regulatory requirements don't restrict you from making fresh, natural-fermented product but it's a lot more difficult to control, so the industry's caution and it's a mix of economics and inability in terms of managing the appropriate risks – but there are a number of smallgoods makers who are still making very good, fresh, matured salamis and mettwursts and other products without having to cook them.

Coffee is another example. I mean, God, ten years ago unless you went to Lucia's or Cibo you couldn't get a decent coffee in Adelaide, it was bloody impossible. Now you've got coffee shops everywhere and while there are varying qualities they're getting better all of the time because people are becoming a lot more discerning and if they don't like it they run straight out of that shop and they'll never go back again and they'll tell everybody else about it. So we've got a huge amount of additional demand here for training of young barristas. We've got a coffee academy here now to support that. So you're seeing all of these sorts of elements of the food industry in particular and you can see it in individual products as it progressively develops and we start to see some of the better elements that you'd expect from these products. I mean, if you went to France, you'd never expect to get anything but the best possible range of breads and cheeses.

It's possible quite easily to get bad bread in France. (laughter)

But as a general rule, as a tourist, when you go over there, you go to the pâtisserie shops and the bread shops and you get some fantastic breads, a great range of breads. Here we still eat a lot of highly-processed, refined breads that don't taste really great.

But again it's all part of that development and it's not just the restaurants or the industry, it's all of the supplies for the restaurants because they're all in a chain and that's

one of the unique things about what we've developed here at Regency is that we are a whole-of-chain, we've got food and beverage processing, we teach people how to make olive oil, how to roast coffee, how to make coffee, how to make cheeses, how to make smallgoods, how to develop new products in our centre labs. We do canning, we're just putting in a micro-brewery that we'll be really getting into full production next year in teaching micro-brewing because that's another area that is emerging and it's interest in the community of getting some good-quality speciality beers. Our small-scale winemaking: we're not trying to take the role of Adelaide University in terms of their role in the major Oenology course, but we work with Adelaide University. We in fact run a joint degree program and an honours degree in Food Technology with Adelaide where we teach about fifty–fifty of the program, right throughout the four years. But what we're doing is teaching our people all of those elements of the food so that they've got a real appreciation for good-quality foods and again bringing the best people in to ensure that they've got the best-quality teachers to give them the base that they want.

Now, in some ways this is virtually light-years away from what happened in the early days in Pennington, but some of the elements look similar: their concentration on actually getting the produce available and getting people interested in growing it, selling it, preparing it, cooking it and so forth. It's worked out a basic formula in a very sophisticated way.

Yes, and you're right. There are many of the elements today that we had in Pennington. We had a very passionate group of people with again an extraordinary level of support from Don, who clearly, clearly set the vision for us and allowed us the scope to actually get on and do the job. I mean, bringing people in from overseas was a costly exercise and something that was not in any way a normal practice for a vocational college – even a university in those days. So getting permission to bring people over from overseas for an interview again just demonstrated the support that we had, and we had extraordinarily strong support to literally allow us to fulfil the dream. But that passion's never changed: the view of developing the industry holistically has never changed, and that's why we work so comprehensively now with all sectors of industry in many different ways, both on-site and in the workplace of the businesses we work with.

I mean, a couple of thousand of our students every year would never set foot in Regency because our lecturers are out there working in industry, with industry, delivering

programs and courses that suit the industry in their premise. That's what we should be doing.

Apart from the direct involvement through government and in his role as Premier, what do you see as the contribution that Don Dunstan made in developing awareness and the significance of food in South Australia?

Don eventually demonstrated his real passion for food when he opened his own restaurant; but I think the contribution that he made in creating an awareness was with his support and development of the arts and food festivals in South Australia that really highlighted some of the – and that in itself tested the ability of the businesses, whether they were wineries or restaurants or whatever, in getting together and presenting something to the public that was quite extraordinary. But I really think Don's major contribution was in his ability to bring about the arts and food and wine in a sort of cohesive manner and promote it within South Australia when clearly at the time South Australia was not a highly-regarded food State. I mean, we didn't get many tourists here, we had few restaurants and hotels to speak about, he started from a very low base but built quite a reputation by the time he had finished his term as Premier in context to everything to do with arts and food and wine.

These days, is this a self-generating, self-supporting venture, or is it dependent on partnership with government?

It's still partnership with government. But it's interesting, we're having a debate at the moment about what we call or what the Government calls 'fee for service', and we have two major areas of funding: funding that the Government provides us to provide training which is the Minister's obligation, so we provide full-time programs or accredited programs in cookery, in hospitality, in food processing, in baking, in meat, for people who can't gain an apprenticeship or traineeship but need to either gain those skills to get into a job, as may be for a school leaver, or need retraining to move out of one industry sector into another industry sector. In terms of Regency International Centre, our reliance on those government funds is about thirty per cent. Now, on the other hand, we regard all of it as fee-for-service, because the Government is just a client of ours, the same as somebody who comes in as an international student pays a fee the Government's willing to pay a certain fee for us to deliver a service to it which provides and supports its community service obligation. So the reliance on pure government funding in terms of

that community service obligation which does, if you like, give us the support and mainstay of our facilities and staff, has been decreasing over the last decade and, as I say, now is only thirty per cent, which is one of the lowest of any college in Australia. Colleges in Victoria who are leading the charge on even a semi-privatisation are trying to achieve a fifty–fifty mix, fifty per cent government reliance and fifty per cent contestable funding; and we're well past that and have been for many years.

But this sounds like an established relationship and similar to other programs. The overall drive, the vision, commitment and so forth, is that essentially contained within your own program rather than in the Dunstan days there was that external contribution?

Distinctly. Yes, distinctly. We now have a team of senior managers, or I have a team of senior managers, many of whom have been here for a lot of years – fifteen, twenty years. They're experts in their field, they are regarded as leaders in their own area in industry, they're all involved in industry associations and consult regularly with industry in terms of their needs and they have a passion for South Australia and the business, and yes, they do drive it forward because they work with industry to drive it forward. So each of my managers in areas of cookery, sport and recreation, food and beverage processing, meat, baking, hospitality, they regard their business unit as to how they can best form it to provide the best sort of service for South Australian and international students. And we're bringing in, we will have probably a thousand international students this year studying in Regency International Centre from over seventy different countries around the world.

Well, you've given us a very full and rich account of your involvement and involvement of others in this whole, quite magnificent enterprise. Thank you very much, Derrick.

Thank you, Bruce. It's a pleasure.

END OF INTERVIEW.